

AMENDMENT AFTER FINAL  
Serial No.: 09/676,423

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please replace the paragraph on page 10, line 14 – page 11, line 4, with the following amended paragraph.

Figure 4 shows an example of a simple communication graph 180 reducible by the preferred embodiment Machine Cut method of the present invention. In this example, the graph 180 includes five (5) non-terminal nodes 182, 184, 186, 188 and 190 connected together by edges 192, 194, 196, 198, 200 and 202, referred to herein as non-terminal edges. Three (3) terminal nodes 204, 206 and 208 are connected to respective non-terminal nodes 182, 184, 186, 188 and 190 by edges 210, 212, 214, 216 and 218, referred to herein as [[non-]]terminal edges. A weight is represented as being attached to each edge 192 - 202 and 210 - 218. Dotted line W<sub>1</sub> [[220]] represents a terminal cut at terminal node 204 cutting terminal edges 210, 212. Dotted line W<sub>2</sub> [[222]] represents a terminal cut at terminal node 206 cutting terminal edges 214, 216. Dotted line W<sub>3</sub> [[224]] represents a terminal cut at terminal node 208 cutting terminal edge 218. Essentially, the Machine Cut method eliminates from inclusion in the min cut solution, any terminal or non-terminal edge with heavier communication (i.e., its weight exceeds) than all but the terminal node with the heaviest level of communication. Thus, in this example, edge 202 is heavier than terminal cut W<sub>2</sub> [[222]]. So, edge 202 can be excluded from consideration for inclusion in the min cut solution. Preferably, edge 202 is collapsed, combining nodes 182 and 188, as well as merging (then) parallel edges 198 and 200.